

DR. FRANZ SPAETH AND THE CASSIDINAE

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The tortoise beetles known for some time after Linnaeus completed his work were all included in the Linnaean genus *Cassida*. The first generic dismemberment was undertaken by Chevrolat in Dejean's Catalogue (1837) and many of these catalogue names were characterized subsequently by Chevrolat and Duponchel (in D'Orbigny 1843) (see Barber & Bridwell, 1940, and Hincks 1950). After the publication of the Dejean Catalogue, in 1840, the Rev. F. W. Hope made a valuable contribution to the study of the group but it is to Boheman (1850-62) that we owe a fine four-volume monograph which remained the standard work for many years.

In 1898 Dr. Franz Spaeth published the first of his many papers dealing with cassidine taxonomy. By 1943, the date of his last publication, one hundred and twenty papers, several of them large and consisting of from two to five parts, had appeared. Spaeth rapidly became the leading specialist and eventually practically all the available material passed through his hands. Although he did not publish on cassids until 1898 it is interesting to note that according to a bill enclosed in the first volume of his copy of Boheman's monograph Spaeth bought that work from a Paris bookseller in 1888, evidently being interested in the group for ten years before he first published on it.

Franz Spaeth was born in Vienna on October 4th, 1863 and died there in 1946 at the age of 82. For nearly half a century he specialized almost exclusively on the cassids and in the course of this long period he was continually engaged in building up his fine collection which contains the types of the majority of the species and lower categories which he described. In 1918 he acquired most of the types of Wagener who published on the subfamily in 1877 and 1881. In addition he was able to add some type material described by Fairmaire, Baly, Pic, Champion, Weise and others. The large Donckier de Donceel and Van der Poll collections which he purchased were also important accessions to Spaeth's collection, but some of the richest additions

were those received through museums, institutions, and the firm of Staudinger, in exchange for his services in the identification of specimens.

During the war the collection was concentrated from 80 into 40 large cabinet drawers and stored in the Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna. Afterwards it returned to the Spaeth flat in Vienna where I first saw it in February 1950. Through the munificence of the well-known British coleopterist Mr. R. W. Lloyd, and the cordial cooperation of the University of Manchester and the Manchester Museum, I was able to visit Vienna in February last year in order to endeavour to secure this superb collection. It would be unnecessary to refer to the many difficulties which had to be overcome, and it will suffice to say that arrangements were concluded for the collection to come to the Manchester Museum. After special packing the whole collection was transported by air and reached the museum in March without the slightest damage.

The collection contains over 20,000 specimens of which more than 3,000 are types. Still in its overcrowded wartime condensed condition the collection is now undergoing rearrangement and expansion in order to make it available for study and reference. In addition to the collection it was possible to secure all of Spaeth's cassid literature, card-index, and notes, and Herr Franz Spaeth, the eldest son of Dr. Spaeth, was good enough to entrust to my care a very extensive manuscript revision of the cassids of the world on which Dr. Spaeth had worked during his last years. I understand that this manuscript, which is in a very confused condition and has some extensive lacunae, is only the second copy of the work, the original unfortunately being destroyed during the bombing of Vienna together with the proofs of the first part which had already been set up in print. It is hoped that it may be possible to publish part, at least, of this important work. Unfortunately the problems of editing it, together with the present publishing difficulties, are conspiring to delay its appearance.

It will be a matter for satisfaction amongst coleopterists that this beautiful and extremely important collection is now housed in a museum where it will be carefully conserved and where it is available to students of the Cassidinae.

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A PRELIMINARY KEY TO THE NEOTROPICAL GENERA OF OEDEMERIDAE

By ROSS H. ARNETT, JR.

A preliminary key to the genera of the family Oedemeridae of the world, excepting the subfamily Oedemerinae, was presented in this journal several years ago (1948, vol. 2, pp. 12-14). It was largely a compiled key. Since that time the genera of neotropical Oedemerinae have been similarly worked out and are presented here as a supplementary key which includes all the neotropical genera of Oedemeridae.

Recent studies on genotypes (1950, Journ. Washington Acad. Sci., vol. 40, pp. 217-225) and synonymy (unpublished) have revealed several necessary changes of names. Since these have not been fully worked out and the nomenclature correlated with the systematics, the older names are used here. In the meantime, it is hoped that this key will be useful to the reader in assigning his undetermined material and will stimulate interest in the group.

As I stated in the introduction to the previous key, I hope this key will be tested and that any corrections necessary will be brought to my attention either directly or in published notes. Also, I would be very glad to receive material in any of these groups for study purposes.

The generic names preceded by an (*) have been checked with specimens.